

## The Stars and Stripes

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### BON VOYAGE

The George Washington, an old German liner now used as a transport for home-going troops, lies waiting in the harbor of Brest ready to take President Wilson back to America before the adjournment of Congress.

When the Peace Conference was called, he smashed a sacred precedent and sailed away from America, sped on his difficult mission by a chorus of disapproval from an audible array of editorial writers. In the cities of the old world he was greeted by such a heart-warming, tumultuous welcome as was probably never before accorded to an individual in the history of the world.

Now, after two months of labor, the results and importance of which it will scarcely be possible for our generation to measure, he is sailing for home. It is on the cards that he will return, but even now he is at least entitled to wear a blue service chevron as a member of the American Expeditionary Forces. And we can think of no better form of "bon voyage" than just to tell him, what surely he knows already, that the A.E.F. is glad he came.

### VALENTINE

This is a bad year for the valentine crop. Today, it is true, the postman is walking up the steps with a few hundred letters filled with hearts and flowers and cupids and beautiful mushy verses and a lot of paper lace. But the bag isn't as heavy as it was before the war. And May and Dorothy do not rush to the door the moment the bell rings (we hope) and grab the morning mail before it is in the box.

And there is good and sound reason for this. Several hundred thousand two-fisted, heavy-weight lovers are exceedingly busy squinting at far, far outside the valentine zone. Even if they had been able to buy the real old-fashioned article it is unlikely that they would have thought of it in time.

But the apparent depression in the love-market will not affect futures. Without the shadow of a doubt the leather photograph to sympathetic canteen ladies from Brest to Bingen is regarded as soulfully as ever and with even more certainty as to what is going to happen "if they ever send us home."

Sometimes before the relief and the sun come up beyond the bridgehead, sometime after recall and before taps, sometime any time at all in a drab and muddy day, several hundred thousand thoughts go down the long, long trail, through the gate and right up to the front door, advance guards of the best valentine of all. That is the only one she really wants. And there's nothing to do but pray for these holy travel orders that will send it on its way.

### THE POILU'S THOUGHTS

What does the poilu think as he sits back in the corner of his little old smelly café listening to the occasional shouts of laughter from the uproarious group of Yanks dining at the center table and keeping silent when the speaker of the moment proclaims to all within a kilometer's range that America saved the world and Americans won the war? The poilu smiles and borrows a light and, saluting in his friendly fashion, goes his way. But what does he think?

Perhaps, as he jogs along to his barracks, his thoughts run something like this: "They tell us we are all one great Army under a supreme commander—all soldiers together in the Army of Democratic Civilization. Then why do we not share and share alike? Why are we paid but a few sous, while these Americans throw francs around as though they were centimes? And the cigarettes! Zut! Who ever saw so many cigarettes? I noticed that that crowd there tonight had plenty of sugar and great slabs of butter, brought from their own stores. We have none. Why?"

"God knows it is not because we have not done our part. Time has shown that America was as vitally concerned in this war as France, and yet, for three most terrible years, we had to hold the bridge while the Americans, slow to move and all unprepared, came to our assistance. They were wonderful when they did come. Never did troops throw themselves more gallantly into a fight. How freely they spent their young blood in the Argonne, and yet—what were their losses there compared to ours on the acres before Verdun? Count their dead and then count ours. There are more than a million French graves to tell who saved the world."

We wonder, sometimes, if his thoughts ever run like that. But none of us knows for sure what the poilu thinks. He never tells.

### HOOK, LINE AND SINKER

Home-coming troops are being welcomed, as they should be, by the tooting of tug and factory whistles, cheers from the assembled populace, cries of delight from young women, known and unknown, and droves of reporters.

A reporter from a newspaper published within two miles of City Hall Square, New York, interviewed a returned hero at Hoboken the other day at some length. Among other things the soldier said:

"Two names that will stand out in France are on the lips of all Frenchmen in connection with the Champagne fighting, and they are those of General Van Roubé and Colonel Van Blinck of the French Army. They personally led their men into the fighting, and to those of us who saw their work there, they were the bravest officers we ever witnessed."

So much for that, spelling and all; but

Private Bridgewater—that was the interviewee's name—got away with it so easily that he didn't even stop to moisten his lips before he hurried on in this vein:

"The dead Germans were piled up in ridges, and like railroad ties, all along that front, and at the corners of the village streets. The bodies were turning black and swollen. It was an awful sight. But you got used to such sights and think little of them."

Well, well! What a hardening effect war has!

To continue:

Asked if he had ever in his actual experience come across German women chained to machine guns, Private Bridgewater said that he had. "I have seen it in the papers that there were women fighting in the German Army," he continued, "but one particular instance comes to my mind. One machine gun nest was particularly difficult to get rid of. When we got up to it there were three women. One of the eldest was chained to the gun. She was an elderly woman and defiant and spiteful when taken prisoner. Her comrades were much younger, one about 17 and the other about 25. I should judge. Of course, they were uniformed as German soldiers."

Mother and daughters, probably. "She was an elderly woman and defiant and spiteful when taken prisoner." Shades of Brünnhilde!

Whom are you going to blame for this sort of thing? The reporters or the Private Bridgewaters? Why not both?

### WHY THE OCCUPATION?

Why is the Third Army helping keep the watch on the Rhine?

Here is the reason as the statesman sees it:

"East of you in Europe the future is full of questions. Beyond the Rhine, across Germany, across Poland, across Russia, across Asia, there are questions unanswered, and they may be for the present unanswerable. France still stands at a frontier. France still stands in the presence of those threatening and unanswered questions—threatening because unanswered—stands waiting for the solution of matters which touch her directly and intimately and constantly."

And here is the reason as the soldier sees it:

"The Rhine is the guarantee of peace for all nations who have shed their blood in the cause of liberty. Russia is hors de combat for a long while. England has the channel to cross. America is far away. France must always be ready to safeguard the general interests of mankind. Those interests are at stake on the Rhine."

That is the reason—for the statements are identical—why the Third American Army and the British and French and Belgian Armies are keeping the watch on the Rhine. That is the reason as President Wilson and Marshal Foch see it.

### THE PROHIBITIONIST

In these days of squads right and anti-cigarette leagues, Private Jack Burroughs, one of the A.E.F.'s rhymster legion, said something in four verses recently:

There is a man in our camp,  
A prohibition guy.  
At least he drinks up "vau" enough  
To almost make France dry.

There are more kinds of prohibitionists than one. There is the kind the cartoonist draws in a black sack coat and goggles, and then there is his principal abettor and assistant, the horrible example—the man who just now is likely to be wearing O.D. and an overseas cap.

Rant on prohibition and paid prohibitionists, if you will, but your real prohibitionist, your convincing prohibitionist, your almost unanswerable prohibitionist, is the man with a strong stomach and a weak mind, who gets drunk and obnoxious and makes a fool of himself and a fool of the A.E.F. Without his type there wouldn't be any other kind of prohibitionist, professional or otherwise—and there wouldn't be any prohibition. Without his type, for that matter, there wouldn't be near so many M.P.'s, nor so many guardhouses. And there wouldn't be so much suspicion nor so many regulations, and life would be a whole lot better all around.

### WORSE THAN SHE FEARED

Here is a little incident which happened in France recently:

A soldier in the A.E.F. got a letter from a mother in the States beseeching him to help her find news of her son. The son had joined the Army a year ago, had arrived in France last spring, had spent several weeks in the training area, and then—his letters had stopped coming home. The sleepless mother searched and researched the casualty lists, telegraphed the War Department, exhausted every source of information she knew of in the States, and succeeded in finding out just one thing: About the time her son had stopped writing his regiment had gone into action.

The man in France who got the letter finally found out what had become of the son. He had been AWOL from his company for several months—since, in fact, two days before the regiment went into the line for the first time.

False to his country.

False to his mother.

### TOWERS AND THINGS

"Dump 'em in any old way. We should worry. The war's over."

It was a sergeant talking, and the objects which he was so much concerned about were the records of a detachment about to sail for home.

Just a few feet away rose the towers of one of the fine old cathedrals of France. One studying these two towers closely might notice that the higher they soared the more perfect were the details in stone, the more finished and polished the workmanship, until at last, above the belfry, the art was of a completeness and richness worthy to crown a masterpiece. And one might find, by searching diligently, here and there, almost hidden away, the most delicate and charming little traceries in stone, and the more secluded the more perfect.

We have been building, building, building here in the A.E.F. And now it seems to a great many of us that we are merely tearing down. It is not true. We are still building. It is the towers we are putting on now. And we should bear in mind the old cathedral builders. We should not do the work "any old way" but with all the skill and zeal in our power. We should see to it that our towers rise strong and stately above everything else. We should remember that the work of our last few months in France can crown or mar the great house of our dreams.

## The Army's Poets

### TO MY VALENTINE

Just a year ago today  
I sent you a kiss from France—  
Yes, the thing arrived in May—  
That was just a circumstance.  
Now the mails are working better,  
Soldiers drilling stiff as starch,  
And you may receive this letter  
(And the sender) late in March.

GREGORY.

### TO PEGGY

Downy sock so neat and comfy,  
Boon to weary feet,  
May roads and trails be ne'er as bumpy,  
Or rough the village street.  
Let drifting snows come piling cold,  
And hourly blasts exhale,  
I'll swing along the frozen road,  
And never foot will fail.  
Squatting in gleaming camp fire rings,  
In sunshine and in wet,  
I'll wear these cozy knitted things  
And never will forget.

That all that floss was gently rolled,  
From slein to rolling sphere,  
By dainty hands I loved to hold  
Far, far away from here;  
That kindly thought planned heel and toe  
And nobly khaki band,  
That fair blue eyes watched every row  
And every fleeting strand.

Nestled within a great armchair  
Beside the ruddy blaze,  
I see your figure delectable—  
I'm dreaming of past days.

A tribute this, to you, my dear!  
When things seem lined up with blue,  
I'll recollect your radiant cheer—  
O Peggy, here's to you!

A. C. G.

### MY SOUVENIR

The souvenir I'm taking home  
Is not a German gut;  
It's not a German trench-knife;  
Nor yet a German hat.  
It's not a braken buckle,  
Emblazoned "Got Milt Uns,"  
It's not a bunch of ringlets  
Of drigible balloons.

It's not a German button,  
Gas mask, or piece of dress;  
With souvenir of that sort  
I just bleed the S.O.S.

Such souvenirs are only trash,  
And of them I'll have none.  
The souvenir I'm taking home  
Is my mother's only son.

I don't get a line from you?  
Pvt., Co. A, 2nd Engrs.

### ONLY A LINE FROM YOU

I'm lonesome and I'm homesick  
And I'm feeling mighty blue,  
'Cause it's been a whole long month now  
Since I got a line from you.  
I've written and I've written,  
I've made the censor stew,  
Still, I'm lonesome and I'm homesick  
'Cause I ain't got word from you.

I don't know just what's the matter,  
I don't know just what to do,  
To get the mail man in the way  
To bring a line from you.  
It don't do no good to cuss him,  
It don't do no good to stew,  
'Cause it ain't the poor old mail man's fault  
I don't get a line from you.

It may be he is a captain,  
Or maybe he's just a "lieu,"  
I wonder if that's the reason  
I don't get a line from you?  
I know I'm but a private  
And a darn poor private, too;  
But I'm anxious as any "Loves"  
To get a line from you.

My pleasures are mighty skimpy,  
My joys are mighty few,  
When days and weeks go slowly by  
And I don't hear from you.  
So why keep me feeling lonesome?  
Why keep me feeling blue?  
When you know the thing that will cheer me up  
Is—only a line from you?

P. P. G., B.H. 31.

### THE SONGS YOU SING

The songs you sing in far off lands  
Are waited for to me,  
And each fond strain sweet memories bears  
From those pure lips of thee.

The waves, in spraying into foam,  
Re-echo with thy voice;  
And murmuring tunes to memory dear,  
They bid my heart rejoice.

The rainbow, as it shines on high  
Through cloud and sunbeams gray,  
Doth glow with thine own spirit light,  
And cheers the somber day.

And breezes whispering to the leaves,  
And roses kissed by dew,  
Will wait my soul a sweeter thrill  
In waking dreams of you.

And so all nature as its wings  
Dream memories of thee,  
Doth swell with songs from thee now,  
And wait them o'er to me.

FRA CUNDO, F. A.

### EMBERS

Yes, the time is hushing heavy  
For the bolts are hailing home—  
When you look into the embers  
Stead o' fire, you see the foam  
Of a swaying, spraying ocean  
And the miles on miles of blue  
That are waiting with the distance  
That's between your folks and you.

And you maybe take the bellows  
That the Poilus use to blow  
Up the lazy, backward flames  
Or the coals that look below,  
And you're sure to be on pumping  
When the fire is under away.  
For the embers are your ocean  
And your dream-boat's on the way!

In the clinkly creak of embers  
There is sound of childish glee  
And the curling smoke is laden  
With a joyous jubilee  
Sweeter still the vision tempts  
And a blue flame simmers low  
Where a white one mingles with it  
And a mother smiles at you.

But the fagots soon are cinders  
And your dream-boat is naught  
When a turning fire-log flounders  
On the hearth to break your thought;  
And the ocean, realistic,  
With its over-riding foam,  
Stretches in again between you  
And the folks that wait at home.

Sgt. Hq., First Army, A.E.F.

### SO LONG, BUD

Well, I s'pose the time has come to say "Good-bye, Bud."  
We're goin' home, our work is o'er, we've won.  
An' 'fore we part, y'see, I'm gonna tell Bud,  
To thank you 'yes' for what you've been an' done.

You've watched me when I lay in bed a-sick,  
Bud,  
You've slammed me on the back when I was blue,  
An' that ole snap jes' seemed to do the trick,  
Bud.

It cheered me up jes' cause it came from you.  
You've split your coin with me when I was broke,  
Bud,  
An' never ast me where it went, or why.

You've took my early moods as jes' a joke, Bud,  
An' though I've said when sore you've let pass by,  
You've stood beside me when the shells broke near, Bud,  
An' grinned, an' given me courage with that grin.

You've called a steady, cheerin' word, an' fear,  
Bud,  
Jes' left me an' I drove that bay'net in.

Through all the weary days and nights we spent,  
Bud,  
A-sloshin' through the mud an' rain an' sleet;  
I know that each bright word from you was meant, Bud.

To keep me up an' on my staggerin' feet.  
Well, now I'm goin' back—on my waltzin' yet, Bud,  
God bless her—jee, I've missed her over there,  
So here's a long to you, an' don't forget, Bud,  
I owe a debt to you that I can't square.

COLORADO.

## FAMILIAR SCENE ON THE FRONT (COVER)



Drawn by Four Flashing at his Chicago Studio

### THE Y.M.C.A.

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

I am not the guy who really won the war, nor did I see all the fronts, but there are a lot of other birds in this outfit who didn't get as far toward Berlin as yours truly. Having introduced myself to my enthusiastic readers, stand back and allow me to begin.

My subject tonight will be a few words about the Y.M.C.A. Some of the lads don't seem to like it, and have started in to make the crowd back home think it's a false alarm. Now Ed, you know that it's an easy thing to scatter the vitriol here and there, and there is a certain class of young volunteers who would rather do it than eat. I'm one of those people who like to crab a little myself; it's a habit I learned around the scuttle but (ask the god what I mean), but these vitriol boys are on the wrong track this time. They are citing isolated cases that have happened during this year and a half, and making a mountain out of a mole-hill. This puts the entire Y.M.C.A. on the witness stand in self-defense, and that is a thing that should not be. Let's drop off a few points, jibe, and look around. What do we see, mate?

We see hundreds of men who could have kept the home fires burning in the U.S.A. and earned a good wage along with the slackers and the genuine non-drafted men at any number of good paying positions. What did they do? They came to France and kept on the job morning, noon and night every day of the war. They did the heavy fighting in the S.O.S. with movies, candies, cigarettes and decent words.

After you have done that about 6,000 hours, more or less, you begin to get sick of it. Back in the S.O.S. the transportation was available, and the supplies came into the canteens. But up at the front, when you were lucky to get clothing and shoes, it was a pretty tough proposition, and whatever did come up to the Y.M.C.A. was nabbed by the guys on the special detail and various trains back with division. Some of it did get up to the front, but not enough to create a panic. But that wasn't the fault of the Y.M.C.A. It was the inevitable result of a constant forward movement in open warfare. I suppose some of our heroes wanted to get hot chocolate dropped on advanced outposts by airplanes. It's too bad about those kids.

Since I've been up with machine guns I've never seen anything of this chocolate ration that the Q.M. Corps serves out to troops, and I don't expect to do so either. Nor do I feel any anguish because the Y.M.C.A. didn't feed me in a fox-hole, especially when I know who had the monopoly on available transportation.

There was a lad named Wilbur who was the secretary assigned to our battalion. Ed, he was a real guy, and he was a real Y.M.C.A. guy. He had one eye. So he sought the lucrative and luxurious life of the Y.M.C.A., thus hoping to be of some service to his country. When he found that it was impossible to drag chocolate bars and cigars over the top with machine guns, he gave first aid to the wounded under shell fire. He had forward movement in open warfare. I suppose some of our heroes wanted to get hot chocolate dropped on advanced outposts by airplanes. It's too bad about those kids.

There were lots of Wilburs in the Y.M.C.A., if you start investigating. I hate to see a lot of boys like Wilbur.

When we started on our marathon via France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, we were lucky to have our emergency rations keep up with us. Then we settled in various castles on the Rhine, and the crabs began to scream for the Y.M.C.A. Where was it? As the lads under that ask why the rain, loads of stores were sidetracked so that more important things could come up. But now our soldier boys are getting enough candy to make each and everyone sick, and enough cigarettes to totally destroy the lungs.

I have purposely failed to touch upon the work of the women in the Y.M.C.A., because I don't want to express the appreciation that we must all feel for their sacrifices and their infinite patience with us. They come from the best American womanhood, they are the finest type possible to obtain, and their refining influence among us has been evident in every camp that they have graced by their presence. They have been an inspiration to many of us, conscious or unconscious of that inspiration though we may be.

Just consider what they have given up at home to come over with us and to slave for us, yes, slave for us. Do you think it easy to put up with our general indifference and constant demands and continual kicks and to

### HEADLINES OF A YEAR AGO

From THE STARS AND STRIPES of February 15, 1918.

HIKE TO BATTLE TO THE TUNE OF DOUGHBODY'S HYMN—In Sleet, Along Icy Roads, Amex Regiment Goes "Up There"—Covers 16 Miles in a Day—Unit Long Trained in France Shows Itself Eager and Fit for First Line—French Folk Bid Goodspeed—Single Somber Happening of the Day the Sudden Suicide of a Private.

AMERICA DROPS POLITICAL GAME TO WIN THE WAR—New Public Spirit Insists on Big Constructive Work—War Machine Runs Well—Government's Railroad and Finance Measures Meeting Little Opposition—Housing Problem for First Line—Congestion Drastically Relieved—Milder Weather and Enforced Holidays.

NEW VALOR MEDALS MAY BE CONFERRED—President Has Power to Grant Them—Border Vets Get Badge.

smile and be pleasant and truly sympathetic? Well, it isn't easy, and if we try for a moment to put ourselves in their place and cater to the A.E.F., we shall get the point.

Ain't it awful, Mabel, did you hear that the Army is going to try three secretaries who stole money? We don't call that "salvaging," do we? No, we don't. Three out of how many? I haven't the figures at present—but I'll bet my last dollar that the percentage is negligible. On the other hand, how many of our crusaders have gotten the yellow ticket for the same thing, commissioned and otherwise? Oh, but now you are attacking our set, and that isn't fair!

Well, here's one old-timer who got a square deal from the Y.M.C.A. and it's an Irish Catholic who says so. Take a survey vote and see what the conservatives think about it.

SILENT SUFFERER, U.S.M.C.

### SILVER OR GOLD

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

I see by THE STARS AND STRIPES of January 31 that the silver stripes are for men who served in the United States only and that gold ones are for men who served on European soil only.

This matter should be discussed by your paper for numerous reasons. How about the officer or man who served 16 months in the States and then came over to France? Is it fair that he should get only the one stripe? He has done his duty in the States and in France, too. In my company I have a lieutenant who graduated from training camp in September, 1918. He joined our regiment at that time. He got his gold stripe, while I, who have served since May, 1917, got also the one gold stripe. Is that fair to the officer who has served since 1917?

Please take this matter up in your paper, for in all fairness the officer who has served since 1917 should have both his gold and silver service stripes.

CAPTAIN.

[Silver chevrons, identical in design with the gold chevron worn by A.E.F. members for each six months' period of service overseas, are worn for service in the States—one for each period of six months. Present A.E.F. regulations do not prohibit the wearing of silver chevrons by men who arrived in the A.E.F. after serving more than six months at home, according to the latest opinion at G.H.Q. This means that a man who served more than six months in the States before joining the A.E.F. can wear one or more silver chevrons in France previous to the time he puts on his first gold stripe for foreign service. But as soon as he puts on the gold stripe, which is mandatory at the end of six months, he must remove the silver marking, because regulations forbid the wearing of more than one color service stripe at a time. The regulations that no more than one type of service stripe will be worn at a time are also binding in the States. Therefore, upon the departure of a soldier from France, he may wear his foreign service marking only—one or more gold stripes if he has served more than six months in France, or a blue stripe, if he has served less than six months. No American soldier, at home or abroad, may wear stripes of more than one color at one time.—EDITOR.]

### AIN'T IT AWFUL?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Speaking of mud, if you ever saw this camp you would grow web feet and most likely squawk like mud hen and try to dive through the floor when you attempted to speak. Mud! You don't know what mud is.

There is real mud here. There is so much that the buildings float around from one place to another. Last night the colonel's headquarters floated round so much it changed places with the Q.M. supply house and this morning the Q.M. issued out all the colonel's clothes before he finally made the discovery. The colonel came down to his office in his row boat about 9 a. m. and ate a lot of moth balls that were sitting on the Q.M.'s desk, mistaking them for a box of candy he had placed on his desk the night before. A hurry up call was sent in for the doctor and the orderly rowed to 22 different buildings before he finally located the infirmary, which had floated round back of camp. The doctor had had a terrible time finding the infirmary and when he treated the colonel with what he thought was C.C. pills he discovered that it was horse medicine.

There is so much mud here that our top rows out to a telephone pole in front of our barracks and stands on the top of the pole while he calls the roll. As fast as he calls off the names we go to the door and answer present. When this formality is concluded the top turns round on the pole, grabs the captain, who sits on a raft 30 yards away, and reports all present or accounted for. The captain returns the salute and then goes paddling off hunting for his billet, which always changes its location every time he leaves it.

As to drill, we do that too, only we do it in boats. We were having squad drill yesterday with two rows of four boats each when the major dropped his paddle and ran slam into the top's boat. The major sure did bawl the top out.

Last night our mess sergeant rowed out to the gate so he could go up town after some eggs for blue round pie. We he came back to the gate his boat was gone. He shouted to us but we didn't hear him, so he ate the eggs and swam back towards the mess shack.

If you care to send a reporter down river ahead of time and we will arrange to meet him with a launch at the main gate.

HURRAY V. PORTER, Pvt. 1st Cl.

Boue, France.

### NEED ANY K.P.'S?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Here's something for mess sergeants to work on. My company of 160 men is fed in one large hall, heated. They have china plates, cutlery and saucers, no chow line, but breakfast